

Message Text

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51

ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 OMB-01 PM-03 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 RSC-01

CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-05 NSAE-00 PA-01 USIA-06 PRS-01

AID-05 /056 W

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R 241410Z DEC 74

FM AMEMBASSY BRASILIA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6985

INFO AMCONSUL RIO DE JANEIRO

AMCONSUL SAO PAULO

C O N F I D E N T I A L BRASILIA 9534

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MILI, PINT, PINR, BR

SUBJECT: RUMORED CHANGE OF ARMY MINISTER

1. BOTH AMCONSUL RIO DE JANEIRO AND DATT, BRASILIA HAVE PICKED UP RUMOR WHICH HAS BECOME WIDESPREAD IN RIO RUMOR MILLS TO EFFECT THAT ARMY MINISTER FROTA WILL RESIGN EARLY IN THE NEW YEAR. RESIGNATION ALLEGEDLY WILL COME AS A RESULT OF SHARP DISAGREEMENT BETWEEN FROTA AND PRESIDENT GEISEL OVER THE ADMINISTRATION'S OPEN CONDUCT OF THE RECENT ELECTIONS. ACCORDING TO THE RUMOR, FROTA WOULD BE REPLACED AS ARMY MINISTER BY THE PRESIDENT'S CONFIDANT AND CURRENT COMMANDER OF RIO'S FIRST ARMY, GENERAL REYNALDO MELO DE ALMEIDA.

2. DATT HAD OPPORTUNITY DISCUSS THIS RUMOR DIRECTLY WITH GENERAL REYNALDO EVENING OF DECEMBER 18. REYNALDO, WHO HAD THAT DAY SPENT 20 MINUTES WITH GEISEL, SCOFFED AT RUMOR, CLAIMING THAT FROTA WAS PERFECT AS ARMY MINISTER IN GEISEL GOVERNMENT, AND THAT GEISEL HAD, THAT VERY DAY, TOLD HIM (REYNALDO) TO EXPECT TO SPEND SOME CONSIDERABLE TIME IN HIS PRESENT STATUS, TO ASSIST IN THE "FUSION" OF THE STATES OF RIO AND GUANABARA. DATT HAS SUBSEQUENTLY HAD OPPORTUNITY
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DISCUSS THIS RUMOR WITH OTHER WELL-PLACED STAFF OFFICERS,

NONE OF WHOM LENT IT CREDENCE.

3. COMMENT: ALTHOUGH WE ARE AWARE THAT SOME OF THE
HARD-LINE ELEMENTS OF THE ARMED FORCES WERE UPSET AT THE
GEISEL GOVERNMENT'S ATTITUDE OF OPENNESS TOWARD THE
RECENT ELECTIONS, WE DOUBT THAT THIS COULD HAVE
PROVOKED A CONFRONTATION BETWEEN THEM AND THE PRESIDENT,
OR THAT FROTA WOULD HAVE FELT COMPELLED TO MAKE SUCH
REPRESENTATIONS TO THE PRESIDENT. ON BALANCE, GIVEN
REYNALDO'S DENIALS AND THOSE OF OTHERS WHO ARE IN A
POSITION TO KNOW, WE BELIEVE THE RUMOR LACKS A FOUNDATION
IN FACT.
JOHNSON

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NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: CABINET, ELECTIONS, MILITARY ADVISERS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 24 DEC 1974
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: shawdg
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974BRASIL09534
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D740374-0118
From: BRASILIA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19741213/aaaaakpx.tel
Line Count: 74
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION ARA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: shawdg
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 10 SEP 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <10 SEP 2002 by elyme>; APPROVED <19 MAR 2003 by shawdg>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: RUMORED CHANGE OF ARMY MINISTER
TAGS: MILI, PINT, PGOV, BR, (FROTA), (GEISEL, ERNESTO), (REYNALDO MELO DE ALMEIDA)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005